

# HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

## Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 17 March 2026

**Present:**

Mr. K. Balfe	Mr. S. Lucas
Mrs. L. Chambers	Mr. R. McKenzie
Mr. J. Crowther (Headteacher)	Mr. S. Mills
Mr. K. Down	Mrs. D. Mistry
Mr. G. Edwards	Mrs. E. Ochiabuto
Dr. S. Eisenhandler	Mrs. S. Reeve
Mr. C. Hall	Mr. D. Roberts
Mr. F. Hon	Mrs. K. Rowe
Mr. K Jenkins	Mr. T. Scott
Mrs. N. Job (Chair)	Mrs. A. Thornber

**In attendance:**

Mr. T. Hankin	Clerk
Mr. A. Jones	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs. K. Beaven	School Business Leader
Ms. M. Price (Items 1-6)	Head Girl

### 1. Welcome & apologies for absence

Mrs. Job welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Board of Trustees. Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs. M. King. Mr. T. Fitzakerly was absent.

### 2. Notification of items to be raised under Any Other Business

None.

### 3. Declarations of interest

Trustees were reminded of the need to declare any pecuniary or other interest in the items for discussion. There were none.

### 4. Minutes of previous meeting

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2025.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4.2 Matters arising.

There were none.

### 5. Trustee appointments

Mrs. Job welcomed Mr. Balfe following his re-appointment as a Staff Trustee and congratulated Mrs. Thornber on her re-appointment as a Parent Trustee.

The three new Parent Trustees, Mrs. Chambers, Mr. McKenzie and Mrs. Ochiabuto, were also welcomed following their election as Trustees.

Mrs. Job confirmed that Mr. Roberts has been co-opted as a Trustee.

Introductions were then made.

## **6. Head Girl's report**

Ms. Price gave her report. She commented that the Spring Term is short but has been very busy and highlighted a few of the events and activities that have taken place:

- Year 9 have completed the options choice process, had a Talk the Talk workshop, received the first letters from France as part of the French Penpal club
- Year 10 – Students participating in Project Polyglot have visited local primary schools to support language teaching
- Year 11 have participated in ELSA workshops and have been undertaking mock GCSE examinations
- Year 12 have had employability workshops
- Year 13 have been receiving University offers
- A successful Food Drive was held at the end of December and another takes place this week
- A new initiative, the Performing Arts week, was held and this was very successful. It featured lunchtime workshops run by West End performers (including two former students), senior recitals, a jive workshop, and HGS has talent.
- International Women's Day was promoted by the Head Girl team and included a talk from a suffragette historian
- A very successful Classics play has taken place, written and performed by students
- The Head Girl hustings have been completed with the Head Girl team appointed for next year
- A 'Live from the Hill' concert will be held before the end of term.

The Chair thanked Ms. Price for her very thorough and informative report. Trustees commented that the Classics Play was a phenomenal show and that students had also really enjoyed participating in the West End lunchtime workshops.

Trustees wished Ms. Price well for her forthcoming examinations and she then left the meeting.

## **7. Headteacher's report**

Mr. Crowther referred to the report circulated in advance which has been put together by his team. It provides a lot of information and he invited questions.

Trustees asked whether the proposed curriculum changes will provide monetary savings? He replied that savings of around £118,000 should be achieved by year 2. Some immediate savings will be seen as the change allows some staff recruitment to be delayed.

Trustees asked whether the proposed changes to P8 which could move more students towards the creative arts will have an impact on extra-curricular activities? Mr. Crowther confirmed that the new P8 does promote breadth, but that it is too early to say what the impact might be.

Trustees asked about the progress on the cottage. Mr. Crowther confirmed that work is due to start in the summer with the building available for use from September.

Trustees asked how the bladed article which led to suspensions had been identified. Mr. Crowther stated that a student reported seeing the item to a member of staff and the school took action immediately. He provided Trustees with details of the actions taken and the decision

making process which had been followed. The Trustees confirmed to Mr. Crowther that they fully supported the actions taken and the rationale for these.

Trustees asked about progress on the move to the Arbor MIS. Mr. Jones advised that work is progressing well. Data cleansing has been completed, the data migration process has begun and staff training is underway. Feedback from staff on the new system is positive.

Trustees referred to the Emerging Safeguarding Theme section of the report and the note that there is a new expectation to understand where students congregate and to coordinate safety responses for the end of the school day. Mr. Crowther stated that this relates to schools knowing where students exit the school site and working with other agencies if required.

Trustees asked Mr. Crowther to pass on congratulations to Mrs. Cooper for presenting the schools 'Stress-free Year 11' approach on the main stage at the PiXL National Conference.

Trustees thanked Mr. Crowther and the team for a very comprehensive and informative report.

Mrs. Job thanked all staff for everything they do to support students and the school.

## **8. Committee reports**

### **8.1 Admissions Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February were noted. Mrs. Thornber stated that there had been discussion around admission numbers. Although total applications were slightly down, reflective of a change in local need, the number of first preferences is in line with previous years.

### **8.2 Curriculum & Performance Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February were noted and Mr. Scott provided an overview. Much of the information discussed is also in the Headteacher's report. The report on KS4 attainment is very informative and the Self Evaluation report provides a lot of very useful information for Trustees.

The committee reviewed and approved the following policies - Administration of Medicines Policy, Assessment and Feedback Policy, Emotional and Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy, Low Level Concerns Policy, Remote Education Provision and Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy.

### **8.3 Finance Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March were noted and Mr. Edwards highlighted some key items. The deficit for this year is expected to be less than budgeted which is positive. The budget for next year is not looking good, with GAG income projected to be just 0.2% up, whereas there is expected to be a 2-3% increase in costs. Healthy reserves will help to cover this but the position is not sustainable. A new contract has been awarded for the management of the hiring of school facilities by external users.

The Government is introducing changes to estate management which will remove the Condition Improvement Fund scheme. The school will need to create and maintain additional records regarding the condition and maintenance of buildings and facilities.

The committee reviewed and approved the Data Security Policy and the Charges, Refunds and Remissions Policy.

#### **8.4 Audit & Risk Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March were noted. Mr. Down advised that there is a requirement to find someone to undertake the Internal Scrutiny review in July. The School Resource Management self-assessment return was reviewed and approved for submission. Improvements to the Risk Register process and template were proposed and agreed.

#### **8.5 Personnel Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March were noted. Mr. Lucas reported that the school is reviewing its response to flexible working requests due to an increase in the number being made. The timescale for the non-teaching staff appraisal process has been amended to bring it in line with the pay award and SIP preparation process in March/April. He had completed a spot check on Safer Recruitment checks and no problems were identified. The committee reviewed and approved the Continuing Professional Development Policy and the Grievance Policy.

### **9. Link department visits**

Mr. Mills has visited the Classics department, spending time in Year 8 and 10 lessons. Students were very engaged and he saw some excellent teaching. There has been a lot of progress with curriculum changes since his last visit. The Classics play was outstanding.

Mr. Down and Mrs. Mistry have spent time with the Design & Technology department. They saw teaching taking place in the department workshops and were impressed with the behaviour of students. The cost of materials continues to increase and the department are always on the look out for donations of wood, cloth and other materials. Staff had raised a concern regarding the temperature in the workshops on very hot days and Mr. Crowther advised that this is being looked into. They saw examples of Year 11 project work which was very impressive.

Mrs. Thornber advised that she attended the EPQ presentation evening and was very impressed with the range, diversity and depth of project work.

Mrs. Reeve reported that she had accompanied a Year 9 Mathematics visit to Bletchley Park which was very informative. The students were extremely well behaved.

Mr. Down advised that he had assisted with the Year 12 mock interviews workshop. Students were very well prepared and had spent a lot of time preparing their CVs.

Mrs. Beaven informed Trustees that there is now a facility on GovernorHub to record the date of a visit and upload a short report.

### **10. Any other Business**

None

### **11. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 2 June 2026 (to approve the School Improvement Plan)

Tuesday 16 June 2026.